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INFO RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD PRIORITY 1066
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RHMFISS/39ABG INCIRLIK AB TU PRIORITY
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RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC//J-3/J-5// PRIORITY
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RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC//USDP:PDUSDP/ISA:EUR/ISA:NESA/DSCA// PRIORITY
RUEHAK/USDAO ANKARA TU PRIORITY

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/14/2017
TAGS: [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [IZ](#) [TU](#)
SUBJECT: TURKEY: REPORTS OF STRIKES INTO IRAQ UNCONFIRMED

REF: IIR 6 898 0146 08

Classified By: DCM Nancy McEldowney, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (S) Summary: Intensive counter-terror operations continue in the Southeast and along the Turkey-Iraq border. However, there is no evidence to confirm November 13 press reports of Turkish air strikes against PKK targets inside northern Iraq. Prime Minister Erdogan publicly denied knowledge of the strikes and a senior Turkish military officer told us no large scale attacks had occurred. Meanwhile, four Turkish soldiers were reported killed in November 13 clashes with the PKK. According to DAO reporting, tanks departed from a Turkish garrison near Silopi but our preliminary assessment is that they are deployed within Turkey. End summary.

¶2. (U) Turkish and international media reported on November 13 that Turkish helicopter gunships attacked suspected PKK terrorist positions inside northern Iraq. In reports sourced to unnamed Iraqi officials, several vacant villages were said to have been hit, with no casualties. The popular Turkish daily Zaman reported that Iraqi officials had confirmed that jet fighters bombed an abandoned PKK checkpoint in the Vansora region and were said to have struck at the villages of Purbela, Birsaka, and Avasin in the vicinity of Zakho. However, KRG Spokesman Jamal Abdullah denied any Turkish cross-border activity.

¶3. (S) Prime Minister Erdogan told reporters on November 13 that he did not know anything about the reported attacks. Major General Kenan Kocak, TGS J-3 Chief of Plans and Operations, would not discuss with us details of Turkish operations along the Turkey-Iraq border but told us that no major operations were underway. He added that US authorities would be informed prior to any significant action. According to DAO sources (ref), Turkish tanks stationed at TF Akrep near Silopi had all departed the base as of November 13. They apparently deployed under their own power and not on Heavy Equipment Transports (HETs), suggesting that they are not deployed far from garrison.

¶4. (S) Comment: Our ability to detect Turkish military operations in the border region remains limited and we expect such reports to reoccur. While significant counter-terror operations continue in the Southeast and along the border, including some cross-border shelling, we expect the Turks will inform us prior to conducting significant operations. End Comment.

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